**Pygmalion and Galatea**

Pygmalion was a master sculptor in the ancient city of Greece. All day he sculpted beautiful statues from huge pieces of rock. In fact, his creations were so wonderful that whoever saw them were fascinated by their sheer artistic beauty. Pygmalion himself was a fine and handsome young man. He was liked by everyone. Many women loved him for his great skill and looks.   
  
But Pygmalion never paid attention to any of these women. He saw so much to blame in women that he came at last to hate women, and resolved to live unmarried. He was a sculptor, and with his with wonderful skill he sculpted a beautiful ivory statue which was so lifelike that it was difficult to believe that it was lifeless at the first glance. The beauty was such that no living woman could compete with it. It was indeed the perfect semblance of a maiden that seemed to be alive. Pygmalion spent hours admiring his creation.   
  
By and by Pygmalion's admiration for his own sculpture turned to love. Oftentimes he laid his hand upon it as if to assure himself whether it were living or not, and could not, even then, believe that it was only ivory. He caressed it, and gave it such presents as young girls love - bright shells and polished stones, little birds and flowers of various hues, beads and amber. He adorned his ivory maiden with jewels. He put clothing on its limbs, and jewels on its fingers, earrings on its ears, and a necklace about its neck. He laid her on a fancy couch and called her his wife, and put her head upon a pillow of the softest feathers, as if she could enjoy their softness. He gave the statue a name: "Galatea", meaning "sleeping love'.   
But what will be the consequence of falling in love with a lifeless ivory maiden?   
  
Soon the festival of Aphrodite was held. Sacrifices were offered and the odor of incense filled the air. When the festivities of Aphrodite started, Pygmalion took part in the ceremonies. He went to the temple of Aphrodite to ask forgiveness for all the years he had shunned her.  
  
When Pygmalion had performed his part in the rituals, he hesitantly prayed for a wife like his ivory virgin statue. He stood before the altar of Aphrodite and timidly said, "Ye gods, who can do all things, give me, I pray you, for my wife, one like my ivory virgin." Goddess Aphrodite understood what the poor man was trying to say. She was curious. How can a man love a lifeless thing so much? Was it so beautiful that Pygmalion fell in love with his own creation? So she visited the studio of the sculptor while he was away.  
  
What she saw greatly amazed her. For the sculpture had a perfect likeness to her. In fact, it would not have been wrong to say that the sculpture was an image of Aphrodite herself.  
Goddess Aphrodite was charmed by Pygmalion's creation. She brought the statue to life.  
  
When Pygmalion returned to his home, he went before Galatea and knelt down before the woman of his dreams. He looked at her lovingly, and it seemed to him that Galatea was looking at her lovingly too. For a moment, it seemed to Pygmalion that it was just a figment of his imagination. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. But there was no mistake this time. Galatea was smiling at him.   
  
He laid his hand upon the limbs; the ivory felt soft to his touch and yielded to his fingers. It seemed to be warm. He stood up; fearing he may be mistaken, again and again he touched the object of his hopes. It was indeed alive! Slowly it dawned on Pygmalion that the animation of his sculpture was the result of his prayer to Goddess Aphrodite who knew his desire. At last, he found words to thank the goddess. Pygmalion prayed at the Goddess' feet.  
  
Soon Pygmalion and Galatea were wed, and Pygmalion never forgot to thank Aphrodite for the gift she had given him. Aphrodite blessed the marriage, and this union between Pygmalion and Galatea produced a son named Paphos, from whom the city Paphos, sacred to Aphrodite, received its name. He and Galatea brought gifts to her temple throughout their life and Aphrodite blessed them with happiness and love in return.

